

A black and white photograph of a person walking away on a path between modern buildings towards palm trees and the ocean. The person is in silhouette, walking away from the camera on a paved path. On either side of the path are modern, low-rise buildings with large windows. In the background, there are several tall palm trees and a view of the ocean under a bright sky. The overall mood is serene and tropical.

Hallmarks

Spring 2000

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Tingling Fingers

I heard a rumor today
With uninviting ears
I was given what would have
once been knives
But now are only
echoes of the past.

I stand here and can
see the end, but not
beyond and feel
restless, lost, scared and
a bit tired of my
newly swirling world.

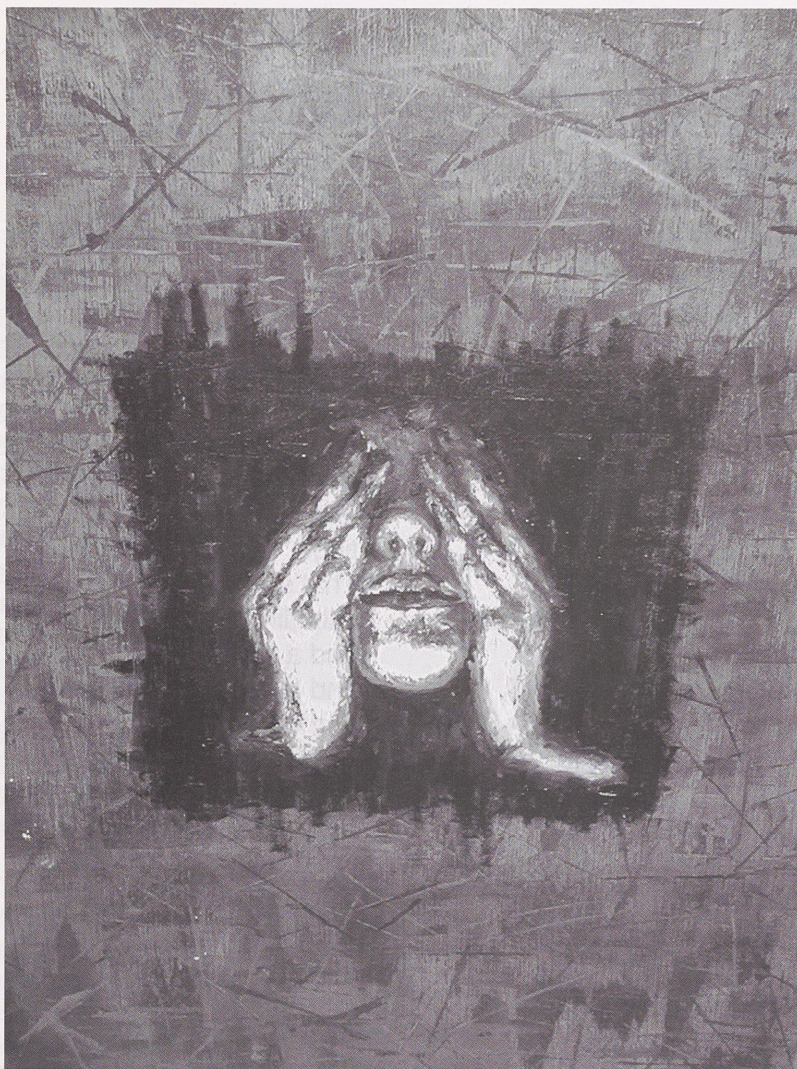
I long for the days
yet I don't want them back.
I only want
to be scared and
uncomfortable and
risk failing myself.

I have realized how
little I know of myself
and the world and
of people and I'm
ready for it all
and can taste it on the
tip of my tongue.

But I've changed already
in the journey to this
confusing point
I lost the me I had
been for eighteen years
and
gained so much more.

I want to glance over
the world and scream
and dance and risk
losing everything
and feel my fingers
tingle
That's what I want
tingling fingers
and a warm night
and fear and music
and I'm sure along
the way, myself.

Anne Rankin (12)



Leah High (11)

Without Shades of Gray

He had black hair that fell past his shoulders
Then down his back
His too wide black t-shirt hung awkwardly
From his narrow build
And faded black jeans clung to his thin legs
In their looseness
I stared hard at the unfamiliar black boots
While we talked of nothing

I tried to take him back to our childhood
Remembering his pet cockatoo
The rusty old El Camino
And when he took his stitches out
He managed a few smiles that made me feel better
But only for a moment
Our lives had always been different
A thin red line painted between

As he sat there in our fine living room,
The cheerfulness of my mother's voice
And the smells of dinner cooking trickled in
I wanted to stomp out these distractions
And reach out to tell him that they weren't real
But instead we sat in silence
The thin red line rapidly growing wider
As we both realized it might have always been that way

I longed for the days when we would play outside
Running after one another until we were out of breath
I remember how his smile exposed the gap between his front teeth
And his hair, bleached white by the sun,
Was cut close to the top of his head
I thought of those times
When our lives had blended into shades of gray
And I wept for the innocence that was lost

Mary Diane Bartoe (10)

Ellen Fuson (10)

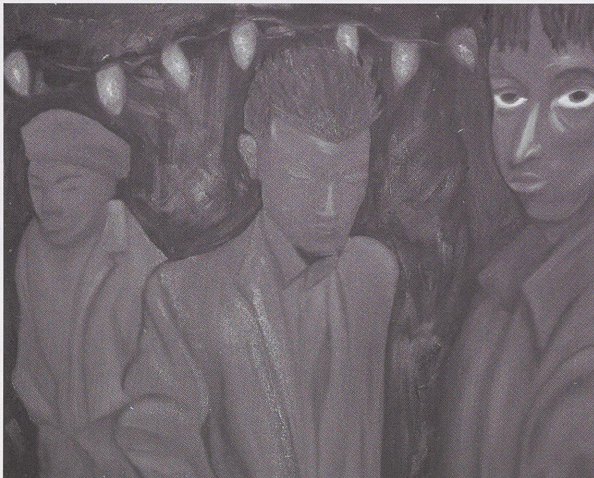
Dancing with the Moon

How inconsiderate, I thought he was.
He simply pushed his way through my drapings.
Inviting himself in, to dance about the room.
His curious friends then came to play.
Along the walls and about the floors, hand in hand,
They would jump and flutter,
Dancing mischievously.
And laughing in silence.

How unfair, I thought.
They played merrily all night,
Those capricious creatures,
While I moved restlessly about my bed,
Annoyed by their impish antics.
How mad I was, to be made to join the festivity.

Dancing with the moon.
I suppose that is what I did.
Yes, that is it.
I danced about all night.

Lucy Kay Wall (12)



Kellie Guider (11)

Fading

The constant
beep, beep, beep, beep
jars my thoughts,
lassoing them and pulling them in,
no matter how wildly they try to free themselves
from the smell of Clorox and bedpans.
My father takes my hand
as he turns the cold metal knob
and I notice how the
click, click, click, click
of my shoes on the tile floor
falls in line with the jagged bleep
of the heart monitor.
My grandmother hands me a stuffed penguin
she won playing bingo
and I clutch it to my chest
as I climb on to her bed.
To avoid her sunken eyes
I look out the window
at the gray parking lot and
the one gray tree that shivers alone in the concrete desert.
The echo of our voices is shallow and desperate
like the rise and fall of her bony chest
and I dread leaving because of the many lonely eyes
that will follow us as we walk the long hall
and step in to the elevator
and I dread staying because each moment
the TV sounds louder,
and the faded fabric walls seem barer
and the creases around my dad's mouth get deeper.
Then comes the moment
when we kiss good bye and wave one last time
and again my dad turns the knob
and we are gone
leaving her alone
with her oxygen and her fading memories.

Sarah Allen (12)

27 Tuesday Nights and This One

I knew that when I pulled up to your '89 Grand Prix you would raise your eyebrow sarcastically, flick me off with the utmost affection, then confidently plant your beat-up converse sneakers on the dark pavement of the Baskin Robbins parking lot. It was inevitable that when I ran to catch up, you would act like you didn't know me, turning your face to hide a grin. So I would jump on your back, and you'd carry me over muddy puddles to the door. Inside I would get the same ice cream as I had for months, and you would get nothing, but pick up my tab. After sampling my always foreseen selection, you would refuse to race me back to the car even though the rain had become torrential. Walking in long paced strides, head down, and hands in pockets, you'd wade through the small rivers that had formed, and that you'd so faithfully carried me over. My sprint would leave you way behind, left to be baptized by the storms of spring. And fumbling for my keys and squinting my eyes to clear the raindrops that had accumulated there, I'd yell over my shoulder to hurry. These things were always predictable.

Tonight it is raining cats and dogs. As you impatiently stand at the passenger's side door waiting for the click of the unlock, I can barely see your anxious face through the streams of water running down the car windows that separate us. In my head I realize that you can't see me well either. With an ambush in mind I slowly sneak around the rear. I attack. Laughing, we stomp in the deep puddles together. This time no one is sheltered, no one is alone, and no one is anticipated. Sometimes it's best that way.

Leah High (11)

One True Thing



Lindsay Beckner (12)

Alone With You

Here I sit,
Alone.
With you.
I hoped,
I prayed,
All my life,
For this.
So why,
Am I so scared?
And who do I go to,
Now?

Mary Cres Szarwark (11)

Megan Newman-Miller (11)

Night's Garden

I saw eyes in the garden at night
"It's just the lightning bugs!"
You laughed and punched my arm
hard.

I **do** see eyes in the garden at night.
My tender shoulder
Where sickly green and yellow
Diffuse from a center.

Green in the garden at night
Softens
Harsh glaring lights
From the cold city.

Yellow in the garden at night
Peers at me
Sheepishly
Wanting to meet me.

I like the garden at night, but
You just snort and roll your eyes,
saying
"Your lightning bugs are gone now!"
You don't know about winter gardens.

It's different in the garden at night:
There's less green,
More yellow,
More eyes glistening with frost.

Laura Lee (9)



Megan Newman-Miller (11)

That Night

I felt so unusually out-of-this-world walking out of that movie
that night.

It was pouring-down rain that night.

I was with my friends that night,

And I couldn't talk,

I wouldn't talk.

Even if I'd wanted to,

I was too absorbed.

My mind was chaotic

Flooded with fervent meanings of meaningless things,

And yet nothing that I'd ever needed or wanted was gone—

Just forgotten like the passenger planes that fly over our
heads

That we just happen to see

That mean nothing to us.

But today I'm deifying them

For nothing's ever really forgotten.

Everything just sits and waits for things to happen

Like on that night.

And for a few hours I felt at peace,

Just walking to my car that night,

Listening to Pink Floyd that night,

Silence of the mind that night,

Silence of me.

And I swear, everything in the Universe was just in its
place—

Even the things that will never have a place.

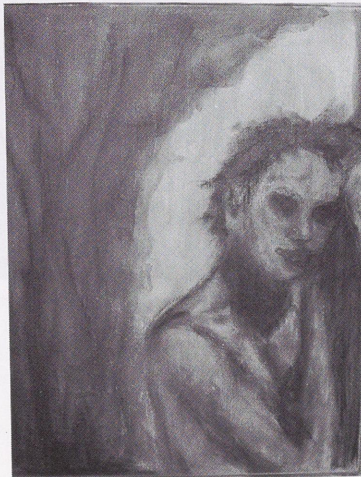
It all just filled the empty space.

Catherine Nading (11)

Baja Nights

Gazing up at the stars, my eyes and the sparkles connect to the common bond of a light amidst the darkness. Orion's belt holds me to this familiar scene. The seven sisters of the sky glow with sibling rivalries. A shooting star pierces the sky like an arrow from Orion's bow. Beneath the majestic sky, the Sea of Cortez is gently stroking the beach as if it were a newborn baby. The night is silent. The salty air reminds me of fourth grade when I used to make salt dough maps. They had oceans and mountains just as this magical paradise, but the mountains that surround me now could only be made by the harshness of time instead of by tender fourth grade hands. Mountains where large Amazon women could look up at the sky and into the sea thousands of years ago and see the same universe that lies before me today. A place where change doesn't matter. The same stars, the same grains of sand, and the same rhythms of the earth. My heart beating in my chest is in harmony with the moving ocean and the peacefulness of the ground beneath me. Shakespeare created the iambic pentameter around the beating of the human heart. The sand beneath me conforms to my body, a place of comfort and familiarity.

Kathleen Serck (11)



Lizzie Smith (11)

Delight Song

I am an aberration carved out of an unwanted mold
I am a breath of wind on the palm of Gautama
I am a collage of simple visages collected by heart
I am a devious path leading to uncertainty
I am the eastern dawn enshrouded in the newborn sun's glories
I am a flowing leaf caught in Yellow River's tumbling waves
I am a gnome lost in Nature's wonders
I am a haggler with Fate
I am an inquisitor beseeching God to show his face
I am the jargon spoken with wordless murmurs
I am a kindred fire with soaring flames
I am a languid drop of rain in April's tender showers
I am a matrix with forbidden entrances to Zion
I am the northern light bewitching runaway eyes
I am an obeisance before the shadow of truth
I am Psyche in search of a face
I am a queer daub on the childhood canvas
I am a red gleam on the hallowed streets of Petersburg
I am a sullen star in the infinity of nothingness
I am the tenacious grip of a fading dream
I am the ubiquity of a contagious culture
I am a veracious evidence of a nebulous present
I am a wanton spirit fiddling with young buds blossomed a day too soon
I am Xue, a forgotten sound of Beijing's wintry mornings
I am a yearning child waiting for some hands to touch me
I am a zealous heart set free

Shirley Li (10)



Victoria Littlefair-Molin (11)

The Man Who Cut Off His Hand

The saltwater solution began to tingle. I moved the stub around in the brine, hoping that the circular motion would lessen the pain. I could still move my fingers, though they had long since been cut away. The memory of how it felt to move them was so vivid I thought that if examined closely, one could detect the current of air altering in front of the meaty stump. Removing it from the pot, I gave it a good look. The gnawing had subsided, and that once threatening shade of green had mellowed into a long gray bruise. I again clothed the stub in its paper wrapping.

This is a coffee night, cold and black; the pepper sprinkling of stars would almost make me wish my fingers back into their sockets. I would fetch the tin from under the sink, and begin with sienna for the sky. Sienna would mix with yellow ochre, and the lovely potion would bleed onto my fingertips and off the page. But Josie is in the kitchen, bent over the stove with one hand supporting her back. The chicken crackles, and a plume of oily steam emits from the skillet. A soft line of perspiration has collected on her upper lip, and her forehead is coated thick with flour and grease. "I have to stand like this, so I can smell it before it sticks." She'll say, refusing to budge from her post. She wipes her eyes. I guess some habits stick with you forever.

Josie was a great seamstress. Wedding gowns, and great dresses. She had a knack for perfectly matching the hue of a gown with the color of a girl's eye. Her fingers were nimble and quick; she could embroider the most beautiful designs in just several hours. She never used patterns. "It's all up here." Josie would grin, laying an index finger aside her temple.

Cancer claimed her eyes six summers after we were married. It was such an irony, because Josie's eyes are so particularly exquisite. Double pools of brown, they dominate her entire face. They're still beautiful as ever—specked in gold and round as saucers. But there is something disturbing in their gaze, two dark birds wandering as though lost.

One morning I found her, kneeling before the mirror. Her hair was unkempt, and her palms barely touching the silver sur-

face. "I can feel it! I can feel color!" Josie exclaimed, her face ruddy with delight. "It's red, isn't it? This shirt I'm wearing, it's red!" "Why yes, it is." I lied, my voice quavering as I spoke. "I knew it." She smiled, embracing the mirror. As I cried, I hid my face in my hands, wishing to God the hue would change. She loved my art; we meet at my show in Santa Fe. She was poised before that piece "The Bones of Ancestors", a blue corn purse draped over her shoulder and one finger in her mouth. "I know what you're saying," she said, startling me as I passed her seat. "The only thing I remember about my mother was her cooking, isn't that sad? I'll be walking to work, or out in the yard, and sometimes get a whiff and think, 'Smells like mamma's hash!' or 'I would swear those were mother's biscuits if I didn't know better.' Isn't that odd? That's all I can remember!"

How could I paint with colors my own Josie could never see? To mix a new shade seemed itself a mockery. Every form and line taunted those rotted grapes, reminding them that our two minds could never again converse from dress to page. In a moment of anguish I did it—with one sharp stroke the thing was done. But I have never again looked back upon it, even on nights like these when the sky teases me with shapes only I could transcribe.

Jessica Crowell (12)

Road to Take

Going down that road again
Looking for a street to turn on.
Doesn't matter what its name,
As long as it takes you forward.
But which road do you take
When you don't have a destination
Which road do you take
When no one's waiting for you.

A left and a right and a right and a left
All take you to different places,
But which direction do you take
Among those myriad faces
Which direction do you take
When you've left your love behind

You're facing the future
There's no going back
But where do you go from here
When you don't have a destination
Where do you go from here,
When no one's waiting for you.

They're all behind you
Waving goodbye
While you're looking for the road to take
Looking...for a road...to take

Erin Williamson (10)

Envy

your swollen eyelashes close
and we are steel bars
in between him

projection is the dream
you wanted to take
from my open palms

obtuse angles
stretch their points
threading my mind
fueled by my desire to burn
your beady eyes

ominous with twilight
and raging with green
the most important article of clothing
is my silent thoughts
tucked like clean sheets in my mind
left for devils to sort
and angels to wash away

Kate Berry (12)



Keely Robeson (12) and Cathy Crafton (12)

A Typically Atypical Week in the Life (or An Exercise in Stream of Consciousness)

So I'm not inspired today, really
But I was last Tuesday
Too bad you weren't there.
It was the first time in two years
Because I got a new cd
And it was strangely appropriate on I-440 at sunset.

Then on Wednesday I had Lucky Charms for breakfast
And one of those green leprechaun hats jumped out onto the counter
So I put it back into the bowl
I bet it was magically delicious
Maybe I shouldn't have.

Prizes in Cracker Jack boxes aren't as good as they used to be.
I know this because my sister got a sticker in hers on Friday
And I used to get whistles and other great annoying things;
For my kids the prize will probably just be more Cracker Jacks.

If I were in charge
And filled the boxes with fabulous prizes
I'd give them all a sunset
And if the green hat with the clover didn't want to be in the bowl
I wouldn't make it.

And I don't really care that it's not pink hearts and yellow stars
and blue diamonds anymore
Because things change.
But don't give a kid a sticker—I mean make her dig through the box, like I did
And tell her it's a prize
Because now I'm the one cleaning the Cracker Jacks out of the rug
But nobody ever had to apologize to me for a less-than-fabulous prize.

And everyone deserves a whistle or at least a big gaudy ring
After shaking the box and making a mess.

But I can rest assured that they'll always be just as sticky
And messy
On a Sunday dress.

Jessie Morris (12)

Freedom

She lifted her eyes proudly to the wind
Feeling them sparkle
Admist the tossing waves
The swells carrying on
Through and overhead the crowds
Her heart wrenching
In their uplifted song
Familiar only from past blows
This one filled with peace
She had reached past the multitude
To understand a plight
Not for one color
But for one race—
And that being humankind
Despite this she knew
More was to be grasped
But that could wait
At least for another swell
A new sweeping tear of truth
That rendered her heart
But a grain of sand
That was alone invisible
Except to the eyes of God.

Mary Diane Bartoe (10)



A Typically Atypical Week in the Life (or An Exercise in Consciousness)

Drowning

In a small town
In a bible belt
In the gut of our nation
Beside the oblivious high school
Where the flag cannot touch the ground
Stands a proud sign proclaiming a hero
The picture perfect, neatly combed hair
The model person, admired by all
An unshaven, disheveled man walks by
Carrying the weight of all his belongings
And the weight of his past life of the man on the sign
He notices the resemblance to his old face
They used to be proud
He used to be proud
How was he to know of the misfortunes to come
Who could have warned him of this disaster
Or is it his own fault
Fate takes its turn and we're drowning
Drowning in our own sorrow
Drowning in our own ironic destiny
The self-inflicted pain is killing us and we're drowning

In the secluded town
In the morality haven
In the eyes of our nation
Under the vaulted roof of the forlorn chapel
Where all is holy and sacred
Stands a cross surrounded by candles
She remembers kneeling here as a girl in her white dress
She remembers taking the first sip
So innocent and pristine
The symbol of the dress could never be true again
She thought of herself as a sinner
The time she prayed for two
How was she to know he would run away

Where could she go now
She was shunned by her family
She turned to God because he would not shun her
Fate takes its turn and we're drowning
Drowning in our own sorrow
Drowning in our own ironic destiny
The self-inflicting pain is killing us
And we are drowning

In a big city
In the danger district
In the hands of our nation
Inside the apartment
Where happiness is obtained unnaturally
Stands a picture of the past
It portays a guilt free human with a friend of the light
A painful memory of what used to be
An unadorned woman stands by the window and falls
Her limp body crashes to the floor with a frightening resonance
Air ceases to pass through the body
Heart takes its last beat in the song of life
Eyes take their last glance at this living hell called Earth
Soul prays to travel to a better place
All is calm and tranquil in this one pandemonious shell
Instead of grasping for the gun, she's grasping for something
better
How was she to know of her uncertain horror
Fate takes its turn and we're drowning
Drowning in our own sorrow
Drowning in our own ironic destiny
The self-inflicted pain is killing us
And we're drowning

Ashley Cole (9)

Fairytale

Tell me a fairytale,
for they never come true.

Once I waited for the sun-kissed touch,
my hands folding and twitching
for one last stroke.
Days lolled by,
ripened oranges turned to potpourri,
and my candle dwindled to scraps.

Once you adored young lips,
a balmy press
healing your chapped sores.
But summer months hastened,
lips hardened,
your kisses migrated from mine.

Fancy little princess,
of knights on horseback
and pink chiffon.

Dream reckless prince,
of defiant duels
and fearless dragons.

Chase these tales
until statues crumble,
blades tarnish
and only a faint signature
lingers in the earth.

Alyssa Abkowitz (12)

One True Thing

A single look so sweet, yet so confused,
filled with love and wonder and jealousy,
I wonder what I have done to deserve this heart ache,
and soon find that he does not even have the answer.

Bewildered am I as I step forth into the warm sun,
the water splashing upon my bare feet,
I walk towards the stare of those mysterious dark eyes,
those which captivate and soon find what power they bestow upon me.

Meeting his gaze we seemingly stare through each other,
I find that the gaze is harsh and no longer familiar to me,
he softly caresses my arm and unexpectedly I return the touch with a soft
kiss on the cheek,
From this one small gesture lost feelings of love begin to return.

Words of tenderness spill from forgiving lips,
initiated from a look of longing for what a righteous heart knows to be true,
young love is absolute and simple and glorious,
and true love overcomes.

Elizabeth Stout (10)



Sarah Allen (12)

A Portrait in Blue

She paints a picture of herself,
Using only blues,
Handed to her by God.
Her hair,
The dark depths of a clear, summer night.
Her chest shines,
Like the tile in her bathroom.
Her eyes bright,
Like the twinkle of the afternoon sun against the waves of the ocean.
Her hands,
The color of her mother's pillowcase.
Feet,
The color of the dress that will never fit her.
Her breasts,
Match the wornout knees of her favorite jeans.
Her cheek,
Dark, like the ink dripping from her pen.
When the painting is done,
She hastily drops her brush on the floor,
And a hint of blue will forever rest,
On the infinite plane of white carpet
At her feet.

Mary Cresap Szarwark (11)



Rachel Cherney (12)

Release

And I remember perching on the edge of the fire escape,
My toes just slipping over the edge of the metal ledge.
My hair was tickling my back
As I examined the valleys of my palm.
The jagged edges of my makeshift chair
Were sandpapering my flesh,
But I didn't mind.
Swirling slowly around the tottering railing,
The smooth tips of my fingers
Swept over the rusted iron.
My taut white tank top melted into my lived-in jeans
As I pulled my kness snugly to my chest.
A smoky breeze rolled by from the street below
And brushed my face.
My eyes closed,
But the monotonous cars still raced by.
My eyes were slow to let light in again.
My fingers had begun playing with the peeling chips
That didn't want to hold on anymore.
As the sounds of the exhausted street below
Reached past my ruddy wind-blown cheeks
And crawled to my bare ears,
My eyes closed involuntarily.
My knees released from the comfort
Between my chest and arms
And I unfolded myself from the edge of the fire escape.
It was time for bed.

Megan Casey (12)

To A Boxer

Sugar Ray Robinson never should have fallen; never should have realized in losing
the years reflected in his mirror.
All it took was one year to go,
when the forces within his frame could no longer persuade
the passing of time.
He had lost everything by then—the clubs, the cars, the wife—
two, that is, run off with fistfuls of sorrow and shame—the
kind he threw out when he'd
forgotten to leave the ring,
lost the friends, the money, and now the fights—
Even the gloves, once fitting so well against his overly veined
wrists, strained for a chance to come back.
He would remember the days—sweet as sugar—when he'd once
been free
of regret, which he'd never even tasted.
Even when Doyle fell for good it was not the fists to blame.
“Mister it's my business to get him in trouble,” was all he said, and
then no one asked again.
The lights before matches held his name, “Sugar Ray Robinson—
pound for pound the greatest boxer alive.”
He believed it then, with reason to, but it was the people that first
saw him falter,
And the lights didn't stay on forever.
It was that one year that nearly killed him, though it took twenty-four
more for him to die.
As if luck had run itself barren, or he had just gotten old.
Though it never should have happened the way it did—for him to
lose his mind, as well,
He may have gone crazy right there in the ring,
with desperation dragging on his formerly light feet.
He may have been lost forever.
Sugar Ray Robinson never should have fallen.
Where, after all, could he go?

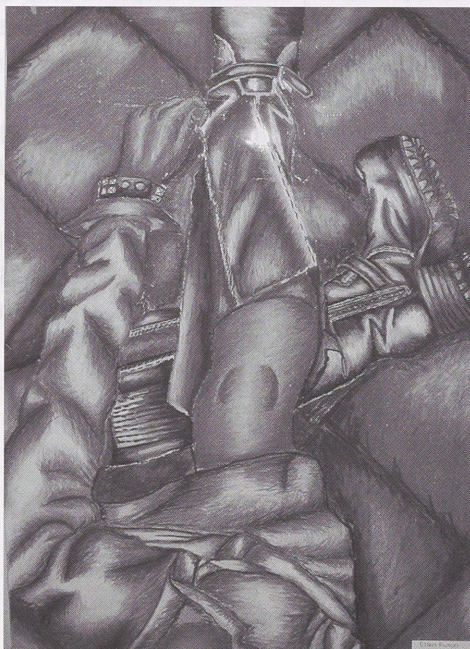
Reflection

Looking in the mirror
trying to find my face
I wonder who I am
Besides a mirage

Clouded with thoughts
Of my mistakes
I travel through life
Hiding in the crowds

Flowing down a river
That's too fast for my thoughts
I can't see my reflection
For my soul's been torn apart

Erin Williamson (10)



Desperation

Somewhere, somewhere
My eyes could touch
Beyond the feeble horizon of a sky too crowded with voices
My ears could smell
Above the fragile clouds too thin to shelter
My tongue could hear
Over the weak weak fence of heaven too far for touches.
What is left of my empty shelter
Is left to wander and to meander
To fondle and to cuddle
To temper and to pamper
What is left of a cold façade.
And beyond, above, over
My blindness, deafness, and muteness
Foresee a shattered spirit
Oh how it lurks behind my tattered frame
Fatigued from tries to escape some mold some self
As my shadow, timidly sidles behind
Yearns for a fuller view of its imitation.
And O, the light, the piercing red shine
In the lonely darkness—the pandemonium of silence
Razed through my reality and left behind
A trail of unwanted sighs.
What of I?
Died?
What of my heart?
Devoured?

Shirley Li (10)

Grapple

i never liked that word, it always seemed too harsh.
i watched
constant movement of rimmed spectacles
from Your hand and back to the creases of Your sleepless eyes.
Your foot rested on the pew, knee up
with a haughty air and a lift of the brows.
i focused on the two wrinkles above Your shiny forehead—
they looked like the birds i drew in first grade.
tapping my foot and folding my arms across my chest,
sweat formed concentric circles under my arms.
i gritted my teeth and gave the Man an angry stare
jiggling my ring i heard
the woman behind me—
i thought she had a stuffy nose,
but when i turned around tears reddened her face.
the curly haired girls in front
eyes shut, arms raised up as if to greet a hug—
trapped in an elevator,
claustrophobic and surrounded
fundamentalists
claiming “their way was the only way.”
i wondered if i would be happier
with tears on my wet cheeks and arm raised up.
could i find solace in a transient life
if i was like Him who did not struggle to believe?

Kate Berry (12)

Hallmarks

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